Faction Paradox, as Much as It's Known

The Eleven-Day Empire, the 'shadow capital' of Faction Paradox. The Parliament buildings are just visible here. 'I didn't join this family because of the dress code.'

- Cousin Eliza.

It's never easy, explaining Faction Paradox in a single line. It's been described as a criminal syndicate, with agents operating in every civilisation from the first to the last; as an all-purpose guerrilla organisation, intent on overthrowing the order of history-in-general rather than any specific government; as a fetishistic death-cult, whose members remain utterly unaware of its founder's true intentions; as a secret army, preparing for the day when it can launch a mass crusade against any other bloodline that stands in its way; even as a conspiracy of monsters, whose purpose is to stir up a War in Heaven and then pick over the ruins. And none of these descriptions are entirely untrue, although all of them fall short of the mark. If the aims of this group/cult/ organisation are vague, then at least its roots are well-known. The Faction started life as the bastard offspring of one of the Great Houses - the Houses being those aristocratic bloodlines which have, since long before the rise of the lesser species, seen it as their duty to oversee the structure of causality - and in human terms even describing the Houses is a challenge. To call the members of these bloodlines "another race" or "another species" seems to miss the point, somehow: the continuum has depended on their presence for so long that thinking of them as "just a different kind of people" is like thinking of gravity and entropy as different kinds of people. More than anything, the Great Houses have to be considered a force of nature, their roots intertwined with the roots of the Spiral Politic itself. And as for Faction Paradox- reviled and rejected by the other Houses, its members regarded as subhuman by beings who already regard humanity as beneath contempt, it's hardly surprising that the "lesser" species should have such trouble trying to make sense its methods and principles.

Even before the outbreak of the 'War in Heaven', Faction Paradox was regarded as the most unpredictable (and opportunistic) of the time-active powers. Aware of the precarious nature of history - but under no obligation to protect it - while the other Great Houses were still attempting to uphold a 'universal order', the Faction was following its own, far more ambiguous,

protocols. Ruthless, secretive and at times difficult to understand, it's hardly surprising that the Faction should have eventually found itself under siege from its rival powers…In essence, though, this is how things stand. The Great Houses consider themselves to have jurisdiction over the length of linear time, to be above the lesser species in virtually every respect and to act according to age-old protocols which have very little to do with any human sense of morality. At its most basic level, Faction Paradox is the "fallen angel" among Houses, a cuckoo-bloodline whose purpose is to defy, corrupt and subvert the authority of the ruling elite wherever possible. So depending on whom you believe, this corruption is either a bold revolutionary statement or merely a way for the elders of the Faction to fulfil their own ambitions. Certainly, it's undeniable that among the "lesser" species the Faction has a tendency to recruit the criminal, the dispossessed and even the insane- and has no qualms about this at all. How much of the Faction's work is actually meaningful, and how much of it is sheer posturing, remains unclear. The Great Houses believe themselves to be immortal: therefore the Faction surrounds itself with overblown death-imagery, dressing itself up in blood and bone in a manner that's almost carnival-like, and all just to spite its opponents. The Great Houses believe themselves to be set above all other civilisations: therefore the Faction recruits its new members from the lesser species, committing the ultimate sacrilege by granting them equal status with the offspring of the pure bloodlines. The Great Houses believe themselves duty-bound to keep history neat, clean and linear: therefore the Faction aims to throw the whole of the continuum into a state of paradox.

Sometimes it seems as though the Faction's simply playing a game, or perpetrating an enormous practical joke against the will of the Houses. Sometimes it seems as though the organisation's just biding its time while its builds up its forces, ready for the day when it can launch its grand assault against the Houses and overthrow the protocols forever. The truth, if there is any, remains vague- and vagueness has always been the Faction's area of expertise.